



EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY

USDA's Cultural Transformation Action Items

- LEADERSHIP
- RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
- TALENT MANAGEMENT
- EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT
- CUSTOMER FOCUS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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MyUSDA

A Progress Report for Employees on USDA's Cultural Transformation

Volume 4, Issue 3

February 2014

Secretary Vilsack On Passage of the Farm Bill



"The Farm Bill will create jobs in rural America, by giving USDA new and expanded opportunities to invest in emerging markets like bio-based product manufacturing and local and regional food systems. The Farm Bill will promote innovation by establishing a new research foundation that will support the kind of research we need to tackle the next generation of challenges. The Farm Bill will spur more working lands conservation and better forest stewardship through public-private partnerships in a new stream-lined conservation easement effort created in the bill and a reauthorized forest stewardship contracting process in the bill. The Farm Bill will give USDA's trade promotion programs new life, allowing us to open and expand new markets for American agricultural products. The Farm Bill must be also viewed as a jobs bill, a research bill, a conservation and stewardship bill, and a trade bill. This is a bill that touches the lives of every American, no matter where they live."

Secretary Tom Vilsack

(from an email to employees February 7, 2014)

Deputy Secretary Commends TN Conservationist

By Jeanne Eastham

Disabled veteran and outdoorsman Jason Seaton of East Tennessee dreamed of hearing the distinctive call of bob white quail on his farm again. Working with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Sevierville, TN, Jason and Soil Conservationist Mitchell Aman developed a comprehensive conservation plan to make that happen. Local news reporters heard about his efforts, and he started getting help—and recognition—from across the country.

Jason was elated to have people visit his farm to see what was going on. Last year, neighbors, family, employees from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and USDA-NRCS employees and their families, helped plant over 500 trees on his farm—just one of the conservation practices that will help complete his goal of improving wildlife habitat.

Recently, Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden visited with Mr. Seaton on his farm (pictured right). He told her his success can be attributed to his "can do" attitude, and he expressed gratitude for the assistance he's been provided by the USDA. And he is not finished; he recently purchased another farm and has remodeled the house to make it accessible to people with disabilities. He says it is only a matter of time until he begins implementing wildlife practices on this farm, too.



Telework Management Webinar Series

USDA's Work/Life and Wellness Program, which is part of USDA's Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), is hosting a six-part, online series in Telework Management. The series is already underway, but it's not too late to catch up! Then be sure to sign up for the remaining sessions ongoing through the end of March 2014. Free to all employees, these sessions are held from 12:00-1:00, EDT. You can [register here: http://www.tmgov.org/tmgovu](http://www.tmgov.org/tmgovu).

Upcoming sessions:

- Mar 6, 2014: The Tools and Technology of Telework
- Mar 20, 2014: The ROI of Telework

If you have missed any of the sessions, you can [access the archived versions](#) of the webinars. Catch up with

- The Ten Things I Hate About Telework: Overcoming Common Myths and Misperceptions
- Telework as a Reasonable Accommodation
- What's in it for me?: Supervisor Best Practices
- What's in it for me?: Employee Best Practices.

For more information send an email to: telework@dm.usda.gov.

The Telework Week 2014 Pledge Site Is Now Open




The 2014 Telework Week pledge site is now open for accepting individual and organizational pledges. To sign up or for more information visit: <http://www.mobileworkexchange.com/teleworkweek/>. This is the fourth annual global effort to encourage agencies and individuals to pledge to telework. [Sign up now](#) to determine your impact and savings, and then plan to telework March 3-7, 2014!



Newly Updated Telework Policy Now Available!

USDA has updated the existing Telework Program Departmental Regulation, 4080-811-002 found at the following link: <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/departmental-regulation-4080-811-002>

For questions about the new policy or to schedule training and information sessions for your organization, contact your Agency Telework Program Coordinator or send an email to Telework@dm.usda.gov.

Free Certificate Program

“FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERIES”



Part 1 - Managing Money in Tough times

Thursday, February 27, 2014 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM EST

With


Susan S. Shockey, Ph.D., CFCS, CPFFE

USDA – National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) National Program Leader

Register Now!

“Everyone in business needs to understand their role in the business and how they impact results. That requires a basic understanding of finance - even for non financial managers.” - Robin Helweg-Larsen

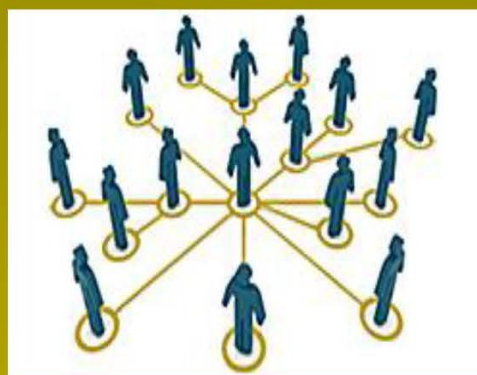




United States
Department of
Agriculture

Get Connected: Employee Resources Day

Date: March 13, 2014
Place: Whitten Patio
Time: 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM



INVITING ALL USDA EMPLOYEES TO:

- ❖ Connect with USDA partners, groups, and organizations
- ❖ Explore workplace resources
- ❖ Enhance your career

Attendees will be eligible to receive Diversity Training credits.

If you need reasonable accommodations to access this program, please contact: Natalie.VeeneyFord@dm.usda.gov by February 28, 2014.

Diversity,
Recruitment,
and Work/Life
Division
Office of
Human
Resources
Management

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USDA Agencies Team Up for Farm Workshop & Pow Wow

By Erin Loeffler

Minnesota employees of the USDA from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) recently took part in a workshop and traditional Pow Wow involving more than a thousand Native American community members from all over the Midwest and Canada.

The Maple Syrup Production Workshop was sponsored by the Intertribal Agricultural Council and 13 Moons Fond du Lac Tribal Extension Program. It occurred at Spirit Lake Native Farm, owned and operated by Bruce (Fond du Lac band member) and Tawny Savage (Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe) and their four children on the Fond du Lac Reservation, near Sawyer, Minnesota. Their farm produces approximately 350 gallons of maple syrup annually, along with 20,000 lbs of wild rice, and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Bruce explained the history of the farm and utilization of various agency resources, including FSA and NRCS, to assist with acquiring land and purchasing equipment. The workshop included



Native American producers and landowners representing 18 tribes from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Nevada.

The following day was the Gichi Manidoo Giizis (Great Spirit Moon) Traditional Pow Wow, held in Carlton, Minnesota. NRCS and other USDA and state agencies presented program information at a round table discussion, with an exhibition centering around "Taking Care of the Land and Community".

Left: Farmer Bruce Savage gave participants a tour of his maple syrup operation.

Right: The Traditional Pow Wow included Native American dancing.

USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights: Creating Change



Dr. Joe Leonard, Jr. (center), with assistant Ashlee Davis (left) and Anna Stroman (right) Chief of the Policy Division for OASCR, at Creating Change 2014.
(Photo courtesy Abe Louise Young)

USDA's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Dr. Joe Leonard, recently spoke at the 26th annual Creating Change conference held in Houston, Texas. Creating Change is a national conference on Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT) Equality.

In his remarks, Dr. Leonard told participants that the Department is committed to equality for all its customers. "The USDA is implementing historic protections for gender identity," Dr. Leonard said.

Dr. Leonard had an additional message for USDA's transgender customers. "Trans people: we are here to support you in home ownership. We want the trans family to have what every other family in America can have."

If you have questions about LGBT rural housing application sign-ups, contact Ashlee Davis with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) at Ashlee.Davis@osec.usda.gov

UPCOMING USDA SPECIAL OBSERVANCE

- **Women's History Month, Thursday, March 13, 2014**

Observance begins at 10:00 (EDT) at the Jefferson Auditorium, Washington, DC

USDA Rural Development Participates in National MLK Day of Service

By **Melissa R. Williams**

Alabama USDA Rural Development State Office employees recently participated in USDA's Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service by volunteering with the Montgomery Habitat for Humanity.

The assignment was to paint the interior of the home. The team, led by Group Director Ann Chavers, painted the entire house interior within 3 ½ hours. Mike Senn, Director of Construction, Habitat for Humanity, expressed gratitude for all the work. "Due to USDA team's efforts, the project was now two weeks ahead of schedule," he said. "I am very impressed with your work 'government employees,' and I wish you could come again!"

From left: Melissa Williams, Alma Bristow, Connie Jackson, Ann Chavers, Carolyn D. Phillips, Mark Towns, Donald Brooks, Josh Tessier, and Melinda George.



FSA Office of Civil Rights Employees—MLK National Day of Service

Employees with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office of Civil Rights spent their Day of Service volunteering at Martha's Table Soup Kitchen in Washington, D.C.

Martha's Table is a non-profit organization formed in 1980 dedicated to nourishing the community through food, education and clothing.

Employees took part as a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King's ideas of unity, purpose, and working together toward a common goal.

FSA Office of Civil Rights Director Brian Garner (pictured right) and Lead Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist and Special Emphasis Program Manager Mya Mya Myaing (pictured left) were among the FSA employees who spent the day providing service at the soup kitchen.



USDA Expanding Summer Youth Employment Program Nationwide in 2014

By Michelle Jordan-Hedgeman The DC Department of Employer Services (DOES) awarded USDA the 2013 SYEP Host Employer of the Year Award for their placement of a record number of 93 students and the collection of 1,000 articles of clothing, shoes and accessories in support of the youth dress for success clothing drive. Five students (working in DM, FNS & NRCS) received the SYEP Outstanding Youth Award that was only given to the top 2% of students in the program. The locally funded initiative by DOES provided District youth with enriching and constructive summer work experiences through subsidized placements in the government and private sectors for a period of six weeks at **no cost** in USDA offices located in the Metro DC area. The purpose of the SYEP is to expose young Americans ages 16-21 to various career fields and introduce them to the dynamics of working in a professional and positive work environment. The SYEP is a great way to provide a career exploration experience for students.

In preparation for Summer 2014, Departmental Management is also exploring partnerships to expand initiatives for SYEPs Nationwide inclusive of rural, urban and suburban areas (including Alaska, Guam, Hawaii and Puerto Rico programs that are in close proximity to USDA offices). When additional SYEPs have been identified for a new opportunity to provide student career exploration opportunities beyond the Washington, DC area, assistance will be needed from the respective Mission Areas, Agencies and Staff Offices to coordinate those efforts.

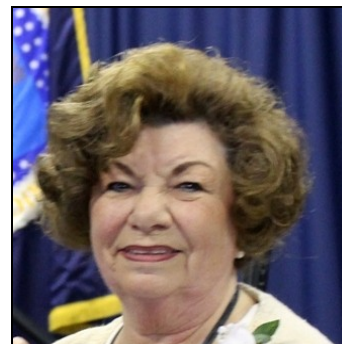
Departmental Management will coordinate a centralized USDA-wide effort to provide ages 16-21 to **Metro DC area agencies only at no cost**. The SYEP-DC program begins on Monday, June 30, 2014 and ends on Friday, August 8, 2014. If you would like to volunteer as a host employer, please request a SYEP Candidate Request and Job Description Form from USDA Recruitment Program Manager, Michelle Jordan-Hedgeman via recruitment@dm.usda.gov. Completed application forms are due no later than COB on Friday **March 7, 2014**.

USDA Employee Spotlight: 50 Years and Still Going Strong!

By Karen Frederickson Elizabeth (Liz) Rafferty with USDA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer's Controller Operations Division (COD) in New Orleans, recently celebrated 50 Years with USDA. Liz's career began in 1963 as a GS-2 with Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), and today she is a GS-14 manager with COD.

COD Director Charles Wallace recently presented a letter of congratulations and certificate to Liz from Secretary Vilsack in recognition of her service to COD, USDA, and the nation. Co-workers thanked her for her mentoring, support, loyalty, and friendship.

As Liz said, "I learned early how important USDA is world-wide; therefore, it was easy to believe I could make a difference. I had supportive managers and co-workers who worked miracles to meet USDA goals in serving the public." Thank you, Liz, for 50 years of committed service!



Join the USDA

Veteran Employees Organization (VEO)

The Veterans Employee Organization (VEO) is open to all USDA veterans and supporters of veterans who are interested in working together on behalf of positive workplace issues. For more information or to sign up for our list-serve, send an email to worklife@dm.usda.gov or VACFeedback@dm.usda.gov.

You can contact MyUSDA by emailing MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov, and be sure to visit the [USDA Cultural Transformation Website](#).

If you'd like to share your feedback about Cultural Transformation, telework, diversity, or any other aspect of work/life at USDA, send an email to: MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov or visit USDA's [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community website if you have access to [USDA Connections](#).



Catch Up On Recent Issues of MyUSDA!

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[MyUSDA Volume 4, Issue 1](#)

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll free at 866.632.9992 (English) or 800.877.8339 (TDD) or at 866.377.8642 (English Federal-relay) or 800.845.6136 (Spanish Federal-relay)

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If you have ideas for future articles, contact us at MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov.

Submit Your Article to MyUSDA

The deadline for March submissions is Monday, March 10, 2014.

Guidance on Submissions to MyUSDA

Submissions to MyUSDA should indicate progress that you, your agency, or your mission area have achieved toward implementing some aspect of the Secretary's Cultural Transformation (CT) Initiative. Submissions may be in the form of a traditional article with a byline (with accompanying photos strongly preferred), a first-person account (describing a personal work-related experience relating to CT progress), or a "brief" (just a few sentences describing a successful Cultural Transformation event, group, initiative, or activity...or some other relevant worklife issue with an accompanying photo. Send photos as separate attachments and make sure they are high quality. **The ideal submission is a great picture with about 75-150 words to go along with it. Maximum length of articles is 250 words.**

Email submissions or further inquiries to MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov.